

REMARKS

This paper is in response to the final Office Action mailed December 4, 2007. Presently, Claims 1-17 and 19-30 are pending in the application. Of these, Claims 4-14, 21, and 22 are withdrawn from consideration. Claims 24-26 and 29 are allowed. Claims 2, 3, 15, 16, and 20 are objected to. Claims 1, 17, 19, 23, 27, 28, and 30 are rejected. Reconsideration of Claims 1, 17, 19, 23, 27, 28, and 30 is respectfully requested.

The Rejection of Claims 1, 17, 19, 23, 27, 28, and 30 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1, 17, 19, 23, 27, 28, and 30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,692,765 (Laughlin).

Claims 1, 17, and 19 have been amended to clarify the type of fastener located on a strap. Specifically, Claims 1, 17, and 19 have been amended to recite a *strap tension-producing* fastener located on a strap and further clarify that operation of the fastener tensions the strap on which it is located and the linkage or linkages cause the other strap to be tensioned when the first strap is tensioned and that when tension on the first strap is released with the fastener, the tension on the other strap is released. Fasteners 57 and 74 of Laughlin do not produce strap tension on both straps through a linkage, nor is the tension on both straps released with the fasteners. The *true* strap tension-producing elements 32, 34 in Laughlin are not located on the strap. Therefore, Claims 1, 17, and 19 are not anticipated by Laughlin.

Furthermore, nothing in Laughlin would have suggested the specific arrangement as recited in the claims.

Accordingly, the withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 1, 17, 19, 23, 27, 28, and 30 is respectfully requested.

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Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 24-26 and 29 are allowed. Claims 2, 3, 15, 16, and 20 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant gratefully acknowledges the indication of allowable subject matter.

Withdrawn Claims

The withdrawn Claims 4-14, 21, and 22 depend from Claim 1, therefore, these claims are entitled to be rejoined in this application.

Summary of Telephone Interview

An interview was conducted with the Examiner in response to a proposed unofficial amendment forwarded on February 4, 2008; however, no agreement was reached with respect to allowance of the claims, since further consideration would be required.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, applicant submits that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. If the Examiner has any further questions or comments, the Examiner is invited to contact the applicant's attorney at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

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